

Dear Federal Communications Commission,

Recently I was informed about the Digital Broadcast flag proposal and I must say, I am scared. Such a thing would be terrible, and in many ways Un-American. I'm not saying that stealing music or video is right or reasonable, but these restrictions unnecessarily inhibit real consumers without effectively stopping piracy.

I am sure you are familiar with the reports showing record sales were up when Napster was popular and sales died when it was shut down. I don't need to remind you that many popular artists such as Eninem and Radiohead still sold thousands of copies of their music even though Mp3s were available on the internet before you could buy the CD. But perhaps you didn't hear of other artists whose success was dependent on exposure via the web. Some of my favorite bands I discovered by mp3: Travis, Misnomer, Underworld. I later went out and bought their CDs.

When the Nazis wanted to control the world, how did they do it? By restricting information. Burning books is the same as flagging digital media if it means that only certain people can watch movies on specialized machines which cost more.

In theory, this sort of thing could be very useful. A flag could be up or down meaning someone could tape Buffy the Vampire Slayer to watch later or not. But giving this sort of power to studios will only be abused, which is why I say this is like burning books. People must watch when it's on with commercials, on special TVs or not at all.

This brings me to my last point, it wouldn't stop piracy. It is 100% impossible to stop someone recording something if it is displayed in analog. With more people less able to watch their favorite shows when they want to there will be more demand for recorded copies. Instead of one person recording a copy for himself to watch later, he records it and 100 of his friends watch it later. Piracy becomes more of a problem and people are more inconvenienced.

Stopping digital media trading is an uphill battle. Accept it and realize that once broadband internet is not such a novel thing, Piracy will fade away. People still like to support their favorite musicians or television stations so they will buy the CDs or Commercialized products. Just like the Boston Tea Party, Becoming fascist about it will only fuel the fire.